

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 10 TEL AVIV 002714

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XOXO
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: IS KMDR MEDIA REACTION REPORT
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

11. Mideast

12. North Korea

Key stories in the media:

The Jerusalem Post reported that Israeli diplomatic officials expressed concern Thursday that the world's reaction to the IDF incursion into northern Gaza, considered relatively mild, would get much more critical as the operation wears on. The newspaper wrote that one official noted that Washington was dispatching top envoys Elliott Abrams, the Deputy National Security Advisor, and David Welch, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, next

SIPDIS

Thursday, and that the intervening six days could well be the window of opportunity the US was giving Israel to achieve its aims before pressing for a withdrawal. The Jerusalem Post reported that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called on Israel on Wednesday to "exercise restraint," but that she also advocated "pressure on Hamas" to stop its attacks.

All media reported that IDF Staff Sergeant Yehuda Bassel and dozens of Palestinians, some of them civilians, were killed in Thursday's and today's fighting between the IDF and Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Major media reported that the IDF is investigating the possibility that Basel was actually killed by friendly fire. Ha'aretz reported that PM Ehud Olmert sides with the view of Shin Bet head Avraham Diskin that the IDF operation should proceed slowly, rather than with IDF Chief of Staff Dan Halutz's opinion that it should be accelerated. The Jerusalem Post reported that PA interior Minister Said Siam issued his government's first call to arms since IDF ground forces invaded Gaza last week, appealing to all Palestinian to fulfill their "religious and moral duty to stand up to the aggression and cowardly Zionist invasion." Yediot and Israel Radio reported that Transportation Minister Shaul Mofaz has ordered an intensification of public transportation security.

Israel Radio reported that the US is opposed to a draft resolution introduced at the UN Security Council by Qatar, which demands that Israel withdraw from territories it has entered in the Gaza Strip. The radio cited the US as saying that the draft resolution is not balanced because it fails to mention Qassam rocket fire and the abduction of Cpl. Gilad Shalit. Israel's Representative to the UN Danny Gillerman was quoted as saying this morning in an interview with Israel Radio that the draft resolution was excessive and did not mention events that preceded the IDF operation.

Israel Radio reported that Damascus-based Hamas leader Muhammad Nazal told the London-based Al-Quds Al-Arabi that negotiations over Cpl. Shalit were interrupted.

Speaking on the Israeli-Palestinian radio station Kol Hashalom on Thursday, Noam Shalit, Cpl. Shalit's father, called for the release of Palestinians detained in Israel in exchange for his son's freedom. Ha'aretz quoted Hamas sources as saying that the organization would agree to release Gilad Shalit and to stop firing Qassam rockets at Israel in exchange for the release of all female Palestinian prisoners and about 30 prisoners who have been in Israeli jails for more than 20 years. The sources were quoted as saying that Hamas will also demand that Israel withdraw its forces from the areas of Gaza that it occupied during the past week, release the Palestinian lawmakers that it arrested, and end its policy of targeted assassinations. Ha'aretz wrote that the sources confirmed Thursday's report about this offer in the London-based newspaper Al-Hayat, as well as Hamas's withdrawal of its previous demand for the release of thousands of Palestinian prisoners in return for Shalit. Yediot reported that a member of the Egyptian security team dealing with Shalit's possible release told the newspaper that his group knows with certainty that Shalit is alive. Yediot quoted Muhammad Abu Radwan of the Popular Resistance Committees as saying in an interview with the French weekly Paris Match that Shalit's abductors have received an instruction to kill him if Israeli forces get close to his place of detention.

Leading media quoted Israeli police as saying that five senior Hamas officials operating in East Jerusalem were arrested on Tuesday, in a continuing crackdown on the organization's activity in the city. Ha'aretz reported that on Thursday, The UN's Human Rights Council adopted a resolution to send a special observer to the Gaza Strip to examine the results of Israel's military operations there. The "unprecedented decision" was the fruit of cooperation by delegates from the Arab and Muslim countries. It passed by a vote of 29 to 11, with five abstentions. However, the resolution that was adopted was more moderate than the one originally proposed by Arab and Muslim delegates, which would have sent UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour to Gaza. Ha'aretz said that such a step would have escalated the council's involvement in Gaza to the international level. The Jerusalem Post and Israel Radio also cited the resolution.

The Jerusalem Post reported that on Thursday, Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan sent Ahmet Davutoglu, one of his key advisers, to Damascus to inform the Assad administration that Syria to increase cooperation with Israel and the US in the name of peace and stability in the region.

IAF commander Maj. Gen. Eliezer Shkedy was quoted as saying in an interview with Maariv that Syrian President Bashar Assad has understood the message conveyed by the overflight of his palace by Israeli fighter planes. The Jerusalem Post reported that the IAF plans to install a new, more accurate missile on aircraft over the weekend and to begin using it in the Gaza Strip next week.

Leading media reported that Zacharia Zubeidi, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades commander in Jenin, as well as the Islamic Jihad commander in the city, escaped an IDF assassination attempt Thursday.

Maariv reported that the Israeli defense establishment is gathering intelligence materials linking the Iranian nuclear program with the North Korean missile program. The newspaper reported that Defense Minister Amir Peretz intends to embark on a diplomatic campaign in coming days in order to show the Iran-North Korean connection.

Yediot reported that a Federal court in Chicago ruled on June 22 that ownership of a collection of 2,500-year-old Persian clay tablets belonging to Iran and lent to the University in Chicago in the 1930s be handed to dual Israeli-US nationals who were injured in a 1997 Jerusalem bombing carried out by Hamas, over which the victims sued the Iranian government for USD 300 million in compensation. Iran had refused to pay the compensation.

Yediot reported that educated Israelis have been emigrating from Israel more than other Israelis. The newspaper cited statistics issued by the Institute for International Education (IIE) that there are 3,600 Israeli students in the US, as compared with 10,000 students from Germany, a country with 85 million residents. The newspaper also cited data that 3,000 Israeli academics are members of the US academe, while the entire staff of teachers and researchers in Israel counts 4,500 people. Yediot reported that a survey

among 320 Israelis living in the US found that 81 percent of respondents said that employment was the major motive for their emigration; 75 percent cited the high cost of living in Israel; 66 percent cited the high taxation in Israel; 75 percent cited the quality of schools in Israel; the security-political situation in Israel worried 65 percent of the respondents.

The Jerusalem Post reported that the family of Benjamin Kurtzer, the younger brother of former US Ambassador to Israel Dan Kurtzer, who immigrated to Israel Thursday, plans to rent a home in Ma'aleh Adumim for a year and that it will "be taking it from there," according to Benjamin Kurtzer. Ha'aretz and Hatzofe also noted that Benjamin Kurtzer will live in Ma'aleh Adumim. Yediot quoted Benjamin Kurtzer as saying that he is trying to convince his brother to immigrate to Israel.

The Jerusalem Post reported that Likud MK Dan Naveh is expected to face stiff opposition to his proposal for the Likud to endorse the formation of a Palestinian state when he convenes the leadership of the Likud's ideological bureau on Sunday.

Yediot reported that drawings by around 20 children from Sderot will be exhibited at Los Angeles City Hall. The exhibition is sponsored by Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. The newspaper reported that Israel's Consul-General in Los Angeles Ehud Danoch initiated the connection between Villaraigosa and Sderot Mayor Eli Moyal.

Ha'aretz devoted the cover article of its weekly magazine to questions asked of key Israelis politicians and security figures regarding whether former PM Ariel Sharon's disengagement plan had failed. While Sharon aide Dov Weisglass and Internal Security Minister Avi Dichter highlighted the plan's successes, former IDF Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon said that it had "fed the Palestinian struggle for years," and Meretz Party head Yossi Beilin criticized both the disengagement and realignment plans, again expressing his support for coordinated withdrawals.

In a literary review in Ha'aretz, Tel Aviv University Professor Sasson Somekh wrote that the veteran Cairo monthly Al-Hilal has "given pride of place" to the translation and analysis of a work by Israeli Almog Behar -- originally entitled "Ana Min Al-Yahud" in the Arabic language ("I Am From the Jews") -- that won the Ha'aretz (Hebrew) short story contest last year.

Major media cited the Indonesian Foreign Ministry as saying Thursday that Indonesia has pulled out of its Fed Cup tennis tie in Tel Aviv because of Israel's military offensive in the Gaza Strip.

Leading media reported that Gideon Meir, who headed Israel's "public diplomacy" during the Intifada as Deputy DG of the Foreign Ministry, will serve as Israel's next ambassador in Rome. Ro'i Rosenblit will head the Israeli diplomatic mission in Qatar. The new consul-general in Boston, Nadav Tamir, a graduate of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, has directed the reforms in the Foreign Ministry as assistant to the ministry's DG over the past two years.

Ha'aretz reported that American actors Debra Winger and Jeff Goldblum are attending the 2006 Jerusalem Film Festival, which opened last night.

Maariv printed the results of a TNS/Teleseker Polling Institute survey:

"Which of the following measures should the GOI take regarding the current crisis with the Palestinians?"
Release Palestinian prisoners in exchange for the soldier Gilad Shalit: 20 percent; bombard PA institutions in the Gaza Strip while endeavoring not to harm human lives: 74 percent; bombard infrastructure in order to cause lack of electricity and water in the PA: 61 percent; start assassinating Hamas leaders: 82 percent; bombard targets in Gaza, even if this may harm human lives: 52 percent; enter the Gaza Strip and seize parts of it; reoccupy the entire Gaza Strip: 32 percent.

"How satisfied are you with PM Olmert's performance?" Not satisfied: 47 percent; satisfied: 43 percent.
"How satisfied are you with Defense Minister Peretz's performance?" Not satisfied: 64 percent; satisfied: 28 percent.

11. Mideast:

Summary:

Military correspondent Alex Fishman wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "Israel does not know how to be brutal enough to generate deterrence. But it is brutal enough to generate more terror against it."

Senior columnist Dan Margalit wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv: "A government arose from democratic elections in Palestine. It has a president, too. It must behave as a responsible state."

Senior Middle East affairs analyst Zvi Bar'el wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "The efforts to release the kidnapped Israeli soldier and the renewed fighting between Israel and the Palestinians have given some unusual players a chance to appear on the world stage."

Senior columnist and chief defense commentator Zeev Schiff wrote from Ankara in Ha'aretz: "It would have been natural to expect that Turkey would be understanding of Israel's conduct in response to Palestinian terror. But such is not the case."

Columnist and former Meretz Party Chairman Yossi Sarid wrote in Ha'aretz: "As in the Lebanon War, so in the Gaza war, the aims change on a daily basis."

Block Quotes:

I. "Brigade Vs. Neighborhood"

Military correspondent Alex Fishman wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (7/7): "Israel does not know how to be brutal enough to generate deterrence. But it is brutal enough to generate more terror against it. The armored incursion that has been going on since Thursday in the Gaza Strip can cause pain to the other side, but is not able to generate any change or any deterrence in the adversary's consciousness. This is an operation tailored to fit the current Israeli government. The political echelon in Israel realizes that in order to have an effect on Hamas something needs to be done. That it is necessary, for example, to apply pressure to the Palestinian population. But at the same time it is afraid that pressure on the population will lead to international pressure that will delegitimize the military activity.... Everyone knows that neither the current level [of pressure], nor the following level nor the one after that will do the job. Just as everyone understands that we will ultimately reach the third and the fourth levels... Another conclusion is that the Palestinians are ready and fighting.... What stood out on Thursday was the large quantity of anti-tank weapons used by the Palestinians. Despite the call of the Palestinian Interior Minister, the security services did not take part in the fighting. When they join, it will mean tens of thousands of additional fighters. The severe combat is still outside the cities. It only hints at the scale of forces that will have to be assembled in order to enter the densely populated area. The Palestinians are waiting for the IDF to enter the cities. This is the trap they are laying. Therefore, at the present stage the IDF prefers raids on open areas."

II. "A City For a City"

Senior columnist Dan Margalit wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv (7/7): "[During the cold war], Russians and Americans turned into one another's hostages with the assent of their governments. Here, civilians are being killed intentionally -- mostly in a war of terror. Now, perhaps with some tardiness, Israel must erect a verbal security fence and embark upon a diplomatic PR campaign for several weeks in order to inculcate the following to world public opinion: a government arose from democratic elections in Palestine. It has a president, too. It must behave as a responsible state."

III. "New Players Appear on Mideast Stage"

Senior Middle East affairs analyst Zvi Bar'el wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (7/7): "The efforts to release the kidnapped Israeli soldier and the renewed fighting between Israel and the Palestinians have given some unusual players a chance to appear on the world stage.... Turkey, which was asked by Washington and Jerusalem to try to use its good offices with [Syrian President Bashar] Assad, is not the only one.... As an Egyptian official put it: 'There are two circles of mediators -- those who can and those who think they can.' Those who can include Egypt, Saudi

Arabia and certain circles in the Palestinian Authority -- not official circles, but some of those involved in armed groups, youngsters who apparently know the abductors.... The Egyptian source said that those who "think they can" would like to put in a short appearance on the Israeli-Palestinian scene. They include Russia, Turkey and France (all of whom Washington and Jerusalem chided for legitimizing Hamas) as well as Qatar. Now their good ties with Hamas seem to lend hope of a breakthrough."

IV. "Cold Turkey"

Senior columnist and chief defense commentator Zeev Schiff wrote from Ankara in Ha'aretz (7/7): "It would have been natural to expect that Turkey would be understanding of Israel's conduct in response to Palestinian terror. But such is not the case.... The first official statement from Turkey was balanced, but the second was very critical of Israel, and only of Israel.... In Turkey's view, Israel is the one holding up the abducted soldier's release. If a similar statement were ever made about Turkey (which in its war against Kurdish terror is taking similar measures to those currently used by Israel in its battle), the Turkish reaction would be that it was a one-sided distortion of the facts that ignores the effects of terror on the Turkish population."

V. "Orwellian Language Expresses an Upside-Down World"

Columnist and former Meretz Party Chairman Yossi Sarid wrote in Ha'aretz (7/7): "As in the Lebanon War, so in the Gaza war, the aims change on a daily basis. That is what happens when the war has no clear political aim in the first place, and at the moment it is designed to save Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Defense Minister Amir Peretz and Chief of Staff Dan Halutz. The 'new order' in the territories will look like the new order in Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia, and 'rehabilitated deterrent power' will look like it does in North Korea and Iran."

12. North Korea:

Summary:

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "The US would be entirely within its rights ... to state that any further launches, at least of long-range missiles, will be prevented"

Block Quotes:

"N. Korean and Iran"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (7/7): "Attempts to engage and bribe Iran and North Korea into better behavior appear not only to be failing, but to be spurring those nations to greatest levels of belligerency. The US would be entirely within its rights ... to state that any further launches, at least of long-range missiles, will be prevented. Regarding Iran, there should be no further extensions of deadlines; the US and Europe should, either through the UN Security Council or on their own, impose stiff and escalating sanctions on Iran to force that nation to end its campaign of nuclear and terrorist blackmail."

JONES